

Dhammacariyā and Samacariyā

(Transcribed from Prof. Oliver's Lecture)

The term *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā* are equivalent. Both terms indicate the **wholesome behavior**. The opposite term of both is *adhammacariyā* and *visamacariyā* which indicate **unwholesome behavior**. The concept of those terms is described in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN)*. A group of Brahmin youth once went to the Buddha and asked the reason why some people go to heaven and some others to go to hell. Then the Buddha says that those who practice *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā* go to the heaven and those who are engaged themselves in *adhammacariyā* and *visamacariyā* go to the hell.

As you know, Buddhism accepts **life after death**. Our behavior in this life is useless if there is no life after death. Therefore, **the Buddhist ethics stands for the principle that there is life after death**. Whatever we do in this life will make the life after death either happy or unhappy. When one comes to know that what we do in this life makes the life after death unhappy, he refrains from what is bad; he engages in the wholesome activities. Thus the *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā* as well as *adhammacariyā* and *visamacariyā* are **based on** the **principle of the next life** or the next birth.

There is the list of **ten** *adhammacariyā* and *visamacariyā*, refraining from which is the *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā*:

- (1) *pāṇātipāta*: harming others;
- (2) *adinnādāna*: taking what is not given;
- (3) *kāmesu micchācāra*: sexual misconduct;
- (4) *musāvāda*: falsehood;
- (5) *pisuṇāvāca*: slandering speech;
- (6) *pharusāvāca*: harsh speech;
- (7) *sampappalāpa*: gossip;
- (8) *abhijjhā*: intense greed; more than *lobha*;
- (9) *vyāpāda*: intensified *dosa* (ill will, hatred) ;
- (10) *micchādiṭṭhi*: wrong view.

I would take the first three for the detailed examination. Refraining from these three is called *sammā-kammanta*. They are the first three precepts of the *pañca-sīla*, *aṭṭhaṅga-sīla*, and *dasa-sīla*. The *kāmesu micchācāra* becomes *abrahmacariyā* in most of the *sīla*, which means refraining from all sexual activities. I will come to explain it later.

1. Pāṇātipāta and Pāṇātipāta Veramaṇī

The term *pāṇātipāta* is translated into English in various forms such as harming others, killing others, and disturbing others. There are definitions of all these things in the discourses. When we see those definitions, it is clear that we don't know the meaning of this Pāli word even though we think we know.

In the commentary texts, it is suggested that the act of *pāṇātipāta* will become real only if the **five principles** are completed:

- (1) one must know that there is an enemy, a living being;
- (2) the thought of killing this living being;
- (3) the way of killing;
- (4) the living being should be actually killed;
- (5) the person should be personally engaged in the act of killing.

Therefore it is a joint operation; these joint operations are not included in the definition of the *pāṇātipāta*. These five points are not found in any of the canonical texts. They are **found in the later texts** like commentaries, sub-commentaries, and the exegetical works written on Buddhism in the Theravada tradition. The Buddha has not said so. Therefore, there is **controversy regarding these five points** in the Buddhist schools. For example, the Abhayagiri faction in Sri Lanka did not accept these five points. Their doctrinal positions are given in the text called *saddhammopāyana*. And there are various other schools which have their own opinions regarding these five points. This controversy itself shows that these five points do not belong to the early Buddhism; if the Buddha has said so in the discourses, such controversy would not have taken place in the Buddhist schools. Therefore it is a later opinion.

I think that these five points **allowed people to engage in harming others** because one should personally engage in killing according to the fifth principle. If the person is killed as a result of non personal activity, the one who cause killing him without personal involvement can be acquitted of. Thus this principle can help people to kill others. Another thing is that **only killing is taken into consideration** in these five points, even though people can harm others in various ways. All the other ways of harming others are not taken into consideration. This violates the principle of the early Buddhism. Therefore, this is definitely a later interpretation.

The canonical definition of *pāṇātipāta* is that *luddho lohitapāṇī hatapahate nivittho adayāpanno pāṇabhūtesu*:

- one should be cruel (*luddho*);
- the hands stained with blood (*lohitapāṇī*);
- one engages in assaulting and disturbing others (*hatapahate nivittho*). Etymologically *hata* is breaking legs and arms and hitting on the head, *pahata* is putting down another person, so that the person cannot stand (*nivittho*).
- living without compassion (*adayāpanno*) towards living beings (*pāṇabhūtesu*).

Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN) itself uses this as definition of *pāṇātipāta*.

Refraining from *pāṇātipāta* is that *nihitadaṇḍo nihitasattho lajjī dayāpanno sabbapānabhūta hitānukampī viharatī*:

- cudgels are discarded (*nihitadaṇḍo*);
- all weapons are discarded (*nihitasattho*);
- one feels ashamed of harming another (*lajjī*);

- one develops compassion towards fellows (*dayāpanno*);
- one lives with loving kindness extended towards all living beings (*sabbapānabhūta hitānukampī viharati*).

This definition of refraining from *pāṇātipāta* covers **the life pattern** of the individuals. It has nothing to do with any particular act of killing. It is much more than killing; **killing is only a small segment** of the whole acts of *pāṇātipāta*. Refraining from all those acts is called refraining from *pāṇātipāta*. The term *viharati* is important. **It is how one should live**. Refraining from *pāṇātipāta* is not an isolated act that we perform at the particular time in our life. It is the way how we live **whether** we live **harming others** or **without harming others**.

The key word here is *pāṇa*; we have to look after *pāṇa* (life). Life is **threefold**: human life, animal life, and plant life. In the **Vinaya rules of the monks**, all these three forms are taken into consideration. There is the rule of expiation which bans **killing human being**. That is one of the four *pārājika* rules which are the severest rules to be followed by the monks. One of that is avoiding killing human being; one who did it, becomes the lay person automatically. There are two rules which prohibit monks from disturbing the **animals** and the **plants**. Both are called the **rules of expiation**. It means that the life of plants is compared with the life of animal. Both are in the same category of rules but there is difference: in the rule, **the Buddha has used the word *jīva*, not *pāṇa* for indicating plant life**. He says that people believe that there is some kind of life in the plants. Therefore, he wanted monks not to pull up the plants; even taking of plant is prohibited for the monks. As far as the lay people are concerned, this distinction is not given in any of the discourses.

The *Dhammika Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta*, which is the one of the oldest discourses in the Pāli canon, gives two codes of the ethics: one for the monks and the other for the lay. The **code for the lay** people is the **five precepts**. So the five precepts are defined in this sutta. In the definition of the first precept which is refraining from *pāṇātipāta*, the sutta says, **"Don't harm living beings which fall into the categories of *tasa* and *thāvara*."** In the commentarial definitions, *tasa* (tremble) means beings with defilements, indicating the ordinary people and *thāvara* (immovable) means beings without defilements, indicating arahants. Therefore, according to the **commentarial interpretation**, the Buddha requests the lay people not to harm the ordinary people as well as arahants.

But it **cannot be accepted because** if it is accepted, the scope of the first precept is confined **only to the human being**. Therefore, if the commentarial interpretation accepted, it goes against the spirit of the early Buddhism. So *tasa* can be interpreted as those who move; **moving living beings** including **human beings** and **animals**. There are thousands of beings who do not move found on earth and in ocean, called *thāvara*. The **plants** have **life** and also do **not move**, so they also would belong to the *thāvara* category. They should not be disturbed by the lay people.

The *Dhammika Sutta* definition is important in another way. That is, the lay people are requested by the Buddha to respond to the living beings in three ways:

- (1) *pāṇaṃ na hāne*: one should not kill those who have life;
- (2) *na ca ghātayeyya*: one should not cause others to kill others;

- (3) *na cānujaññā hanataṃ paresaṃ*: there are killings going on in the society. We should not give our consent.

All these three principles should come together to perform refraining from harming others (*pāṇātipātā*). It is difficult task for the ordinary human being, so the Buddha starts with the first task, says that don't disturb others. Then you should go to the second one that you should not cause others to disturb anyone else. And finally we should **not consent to any kinds of killing in the society**. **This is where Buddhism goes against eating meat**. It is not easy task but eventually you should develop such virtue according to Buddhism.

2. Adinnādāna and Adinnādāna Veramaṇī

Adinnādāna is taking what is not given. The *Sāleyyaka Sutta* defines it as *yaṃ taṃ parassa paravittūpakaraṇaṃ gāmagataṃ vā araññagataṃ vā theyyasankhātāṃ ādātā hoti*: taking (*ādātā*) belonging to others (*paravittūpakaraṇaṃ*) either in the village (*gāmagataṃ*) or in the forest (*araññagataṃ*) with the intention of stealing (*theyyasankhātāṃ*).

The key word here is *vittūpakaraṇaṃ*. It can be interpreted in two ways. One is that it indicates two things, *vitta* and *upakaraṇaṃ*. *Vitta* is equivalent to *dāna* (wealth); *upakaraṇaṃ* is instrument. So wealth (*dāna*) and the instrument (*upakaraṇaṃ*) can be taken with the intention of stealing; they can be taken either in the village or in the forest. The other interpretation is that *vittūpakaraṇaṃ* is the 'precious instrument,' 'important instrument.' So the **precious instrument** which is in the village or the forest can be taken with the intention of stealing. That is what is called *adinnādāna*.

It is very interesting that these ethical principles were identified by the society when the individuals started agriculture. When they were hunter, they did not have these kinds of principles; they killed, robbed, and did not have any sexual ethics in the period of hunting. So those **ethical principles** were introduced when the people started cultivation and when they **settled down** into the **agricultural society**.

Therefore, this principle of not taking what is not given came to be known in the agricultural society. In the agricultural society, those instruments were **the most precious things** that the people had. Think of the **early instruments** which the primordial men invented; sometimes they might keep them in the forest after finishing the work. Therefore those instruments were available in the village or in the forest. These were the **only property** that the people had in this era of civilization. If these instruments were taken, their life would not be kept because they could not cultivate any more. Therefore, at the early stage of human civilization, **taking what is not given is understood as taking the early instruments that men used**. Later on the individuals **inherited various things gradually**. They may also be known as *vittūpakaraṇā*. It was not wealth such as gold coins and various other accessories people had, but later on *vittūpakaraṇā* was understood **as everything**. So this is the earliest definition of *adinnādāna*.

Refraining from *adinnādāna* is defined as *na ādātā hoti*: not taking what is not given. There are **four principles** that govern all forms of ethics in Buddhism, that is, refraining from harming others, taking

what is not given, sexual misconduct, and falsehood. They are given in various places in various forms of ethics. For example, as far as the **Buddhist monks** are concerned, these four are given in two different ways. The first way is that they are given as the Vinaya rules. These four are divided into **various subtle forms** and given **under the Vinaya rules**. Another way is that these four are identified as the foundation on which the order of monks places. In this sense, they are called *cattāro akaraṇīyā dhammā*: four *dhammas* that should not be violated by the monks because the monk-hood places on them. In that sense, *pāṇātipātā* means **all forms** of harming; even in the subtle way, one should not be harmed because it violates the principle. Taking what is not given is defined as taking even grass-blade belonging to another person; even the grass-blade should not be taken with the intention of stealing. And the sexual misconduct is all forms of sexual activities; the monks should refrain from them. The falsehood is also all forms of falsehood.

It is important when we compare this with the **four parājika rules** which indicate the same things. The monk violates the *parājika* rules only if he kills the human being; taking what is not given is not to take something that is punishable by the government; the monk should not do sexual intercourse with the woman; and the monk should not indicate others that he has supernatural powers or that he has developed various forms of *jhāna* and attainment, or that he has become an arahant. This type of talking is prohibited under the fourth *parājika* rule. So *parājika* rules offer the **four principles in different level**. Thus there are various levels of these four principles. **The most basic level** is called *akaraṇīyā dhammā*; they are not to be violated; they should not be broken in any form and in any way. So this is how the second precept is interpreted for the lay people. For the monks, there are different levels of meaning.

Now, as in the first one, the individuals should respond to **refraining from adinnādāna** in three ways: (1) *adinnaṃ parivajjayeyya*: one should not take what is not given; (2) *na hāraye*: one should not cause anyone to take what is not given; (3) *harataṃ nānujaññā*: there are various forms of robberies, stealing, black-marketing, bribery and corruption in the society. We should not give our consent. But we keep quiet when these things happen in the society, thinking that we don't take what is not given and that let others do whatever they want. People do not know that they violate the second principle by keeping quiet.

It is difficult for us to practice them. The Buddha says that the best way is to go into all three forms gradually and to avoid taking everything which is not given (*sabbaṃ adinnaṃ parivajjayeyya*). This means that **all forms of taking** what is not given **should be avoided**. That is, one should not take the ownership into consideration when one takes something from another. There are various things which the ownership is not given; the Buddha says that it is not your problem; your problem is that you don't own it, so don't take it. If something that does not belong to you, it belongs to others. Therefore do not take it. The Buddha says that **don't take anything anywhere** (*kiñci kvaci*) what is not given. This is the way of living of the intelligent disciple of the Buddha. There is a story to elaborate this. Once upon a time, a person was wandering in the forest by accident. He realized that there was no way of coming out. There was no village near by, so he could not call anyone. He realized also that there was nobody to come to that forest since a hundred years ago and nobody would come from that time till a

hundred years later. But, even in that situation, if he found a small needle on the ground and take it, he would violate the principle of not taking what is not given because that needle belongs to someone else. This is the meaning of that we should not take anything anywhere (*kiñci kvaci*) what does not belong to us.

The term *adinnādāna* or refraining from *adinnādāna* does **not** take **only the material things** into consideration. There are **various subtle forms** of things which all are included in the second principle. Time **can be stolen**; service can be stolen, so on. All that is *adinnādāna*. In the 13 discourses of the *Sīlakkhandha Vagga* of the *Dīga Nikāya*, three forms of stealing are taken into consideration:

- (1) one can steal by way of weighing (*tulākūṭa*);
- (2) by way of measuring (*mānakūṭa*);
- (3) by way of business of small gold coins (*kamsakūṭa*).

During the time of the Buddha, people in the village did not know how to weigh and measure things so that they could easily be deceived. For the gold and precious stones, even we educated people do not know how to measure them. Therefore, people can be easily deceived. The Buddha says that people are deceived in these three ways in the society. It is not to be done if one wants to perform abstinence from taking what is not given.

3. Kāmesu Micchācāra and Kāmesu Micchācāra Veramaṇī

The term *kāmesu* is in the **plural** so that it is wrongly understood as the ratification of the five senses. It is not so. In the texts there is the term *pañcakāmaguṇa* (qualities of five sensual pleasures) which is not taken into consideration in *kāmesu micchācāra*. There is a different term used for *kāmesu micchācāra* by the Buddha himself, that is, *paradāragamana* (going to woman belonging to others). The Buddha himself says that *kāmesu micchācāra* is *paradāragamana*. Therefore, it has nothing to do with ratification of the five senses.

For example, in the *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN), the Buddha says that there are four defiled actions which are called *cattāro kāma-kilesa*. They are *pāṇātipāta*, *adinnādāna*, *kāmesu micchācāra*, and *musāvāda*. Then the Buddha himself translates what he has said into words and the term *kāmesu micchācāra* has become *paradāragamana*. Therefore, *kāmesu micchācāra* and *paradāragamana* are the same. In the *Mala Vagga* of the *Dhammapada*, the five precepts are given as refraining from *pāṇātipāta*, *adinnādāna*, *paradāragamana*, *musāvāda*, and *surā-meraya*.¹ Thus *kāmesu micchācāra* is replaced by *paradāragamana*.

¹ It is quite strange that *surā-meraya* is not given as *adhammacariyā* and *visamacariyā* in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta* (MN). And refraining from *surā-meraya* is not given in the *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā*. See the first part of this chapter. The reason for this is neither given in the discourses nor in the commentaries. Prof. Oliver personally thinks that the consumption of the liquor was highly condemned during the time of the Buddha; the punishment for it is described in the Hindu texts. It was one of the four vicious sins in Hinduism, but falsehood was not one of them. It is said that only the Shudra consume the liquor. If the Brahmin drinks, his tongue should be cut or he should be vanished from the Brahmin society. In such a society the Buddha knew that the Brahmins are not supposed to consume the liquor. Therefore, when the young Brahmins came to ask, the Buddha addressed them the **list of ten** *adhammacariyā* in which the *surā-meraya* is **omitted**.

Now, the question that would arise is why the term *kāmesu* is given in the plural if it is *paradāragamana*. There is answer to this question in the **definition of *kāmesu micchācāra*** given in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN)*. This sutta says that there are **various categories of women**. Some are looked after by the mother; some are by the father; some are by the parents; some are by the brothers; some are by the sisters; some are by the relatives; some are by the husband; some are by the norms of the society; some are by the punishment imposed by the government; then the Buddha says that there are various practices carried out by some men in various societies to show that they make protection. For example, some women take a stick in their hands, wear the special clothes, and garlanded so on. There are various tribal practices which look after women. Therefore, women are categorized in this way in the definition of the third precept.

The Buddha says that the man should not go to any of these women. So the general feeling and the opinion of the society in all times show that a man should not go to a woman who is married. This is a social aspect; it is not so according to Buddhism. Woman is looked after by various people, society, norms, and practices. Therefore, **there is no possibility for a man to go to any of the women in the society. All are protected**. To indicate this, the Buddha has used the term *kāmesu*. What is prohibited is **not only from going to the married women but also to women of all categories**.

A woman can be approached in two ways: **by love** and **by trap**. Both are discouraged in Buddhism. **Don't go to a woman** forcefully and don't go to a woman by winning over her love, if the woman **belongs to another**. This is the meaning indicated in the third precept; nothing else. This third precept is an important contribution of Buddhism to the society because during and even before the time of the Buddha in all the societies what had been practiced was polygamy. In Hinduism, a Brahmin is allowed to have six wives; a Kshatriya four wives; a Vaishya two wives; only a Shudra has to have only one wife. So having one wife is a menial thing according to Hinduism. In Confucianism a man can have nine wives. In Islam polygamy is also practiced. Christianity is monogamy but it is much later religion than Buddhism. In the **all pre-Buddhist religion**, the **polygamy** was practiced.

In the **third precept** what is indicated is that a man can have only one woman. If he goes to another woman and leaves his wife, it is taken as *paradāragamana* (going to a woman belonging to others). The Buddha prohibited his lay disciples from following polygamous practice prevailed in the society of Hinduism. This **monogamy** is indicated in so many places in Buddhism. There are two things indicated in the third precept: one is that a man should have **only one woman**; the other is that **premarital sexual engagement** is also **not allowed**.

There is another important point. In all societies, even today, there is a **tendency towards leniency for man in sexual activities**. Even if they are married, they are free to have sexual relationship with other women. Only the women should be loyal to the husbands, not the men. There are various occupations that cause men miss their mistresses for a long time; then, there should be an opportunity that provide for them to satisfy their sexual desires. For example, the pilot of the ship, who has to be away from his wife for some months, is allowed to have sexual engagement with other women. In Sri Lanka, men are freer than women in sexual activities; they are allowed to have premarital

sexual intercourse but not women, according to Sri Lankan Hindu custom. Thus some sort of leniency is carried out towards men. **Buddhism is against this tendency.** According to Buddhism, **ethics has no sex distinction; ethics is meaningful for both men and women.** If a man is harmed by a woman, it is also *paradāragamana*. In this third precept both are in the same position. Therefore, the third precept is so important for **protection** and **emancipation of women.**

In the Buddhist discourses, the institution of marriage, the responsibility of husband and wife, and of mother and children are given on the principle of monogamy. There are two terms indicating **the institution of marriage** in the Pāli discourses: *avaha* and *vivaha*. The Buddha enacted that no monks should be engaged in such type of activities; this Vinaya rule belongs to the *Saṅghādisesa* category; in this rule there are various offences that monk should not do. In that rule, what the Buddha has said is that the monk should not do anything regarding *avaha* or *vivaha*. In the *Sela Sutta* (MN), the Brahmin Sela was preparing for a *dāna*. His friends were busy with digging out ovens, chopping wood, washing dishes, so on. And friends asked him, "Will there be *vivaha* or *avaha* at your place today or tomorrow?" So *avaha* and *vivaha* are considered as can be taken at the place where lots of people gathered.

In the various cases within the Pāli canon itself, these two words are found. *Avaha* is 'taking a woman in' (*itthi gahaṇaṃ*; *kaññā gahaṇaṃ*); *vivaha* is 'giving a woman away to another person.' (*itthi dānaṃ*). The term *itthi gahaṇaṃ* and *itthi dānaṃ* is important because **only one woman** is given either in *avaha* or in *vivaha*. Another important thing is that the institution of marriage centers about woman not man because these two terms are defined in relation to woman; **woman** is given **the most important part** in the institution of marriage.

4. Musāvāda and Musāvādā Veramaṇī

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To be continued next lecture